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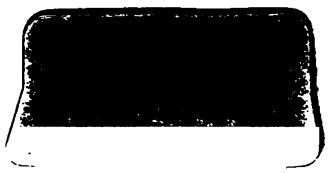
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A

MANUAL

FOR THE

PARISH PRIEST,

BEING A FEW HINTS ON

THE PASTORAL CARE,

TO THE

YOUNGER CLERGY

OF THE

Church of England;

FROM AN

ELDER BROTHER.

Στηριξον τους αδελφους σου.

Luke xxii. 34.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON,
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1815.

1. Church of England - Clergy
2. Clergy - Duty and Life

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TO

THE MOST REVEREND

THE ARCHBISHOPS,

AND

THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE BISHOPS

OF

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

MY LORDS,

THIS little Tract, the production of the leisure hours afforded to the author in the last twelve months, I beg to lay at the feet of your Lordships, not only as the best means of rendering my work

Z 17

as useful as its merits will admit, but as a duty I owe to the Apostolical Order, set over that branch of the Christian Church, to which I belong.

The subject, my Lords, is highly important to the National Church, perhaps I might add, to the whole Christian world; for a due discharge of the pastoral office on so considerable a portion of the pure Church, as that by God's good providence preserved within the British dominion, must be of great importance to the general cause of Christianity.

My opinion of the work, allow

allow me to say, is rather favourable; indeed if it had been otherwise I should not have presumed to solicit the countenance of your Lordships, nor could I have entertained a hope of its being received by my brethren. But, my Lords, when I say my opinion is favourable, I do not feel any literary pride; the work is not of that description which requires genius, or any uncommon extent of learning; it is merely a few hints from an elderly ecclesiastic for the use of the younger clergy.

I do think however, my

Lords, that these hints form a manual of pastoral advice, which, to the younger part of the ministry, may be of great use. Many a young man is no sooner ordained to the ministerial office; than he is placed in a situation far distant from those who are able and willing to give him good counsel; where he is surrounded with all the alluring temptations of the world, at an age when he still requires a friendly monitor.

To a young man under these circumstances, my book may be of infinite service; it may supply

supply the place of a Mentor; it may excite him to pay attention to the duties of his sacred calling; "to flee youthful lusts," and "to shew himself a workman approved unto God that needeth not be ashamed;" it may preserve him from negligence and folly in this world, and their dreadful consequences in the world to come.

Such as my book is, I lay it before your Lordships and my brethren; should you, my Lords, see fit to approve, and they to read it, should the work attain such a circulation as to give a ground of hope that

that I may in any reasonable degree be instrumental in animating the younger clergy of the Church of England to an active and faithful discharge of their ministerial functions, great will be my reward. But, my Lords, if only one copy of my little Tract shall leave the bookseller's shop, and that one copy shall in any measure be the happy means of rendering one unwary brother, instead of a snare to weak Christians, a useful servant of his Divine Master, I shall deem my labour, and the expence of the whole edition amply repaid.

And

And now, my Lords, I will detain you no longer than to beg, that whatever may be your opinions, whatever may be the success of my work, you will offer up your prayers to the throne of Heaven for acceptance of my endeavours, however unworthy, in the service of God :—and to assure your Lordships, that awake to the arduousness of the situation in which you are placed, feeling that it may require all the great talents your Lordships possess, and all the divine influence we may expect will be shed upon the highest order in Christ's Church, under circumstances,

stances, with which from the present aspect of ecclesiastical affairs, you may have yet to contend; deeply impressed, my Lords, with these considerations, that the Almighty may shower down upon your Lordships such abundance of his grace as will support you in every danger, and carry you through every trial, is the daily prayer of,

My Lords,
Your Graces,
And your Lordships
Most dutiful and respectful
Servant,
THE AUTHOR.

4th Sept. 1815.

ERRATA.

Page	5,	*line* 13, *for* and Secker *read* and a Secker
	10,	15, *for* our *read* his
	10,	17, *for* our *read* his
	10,	18, *for* our lives *read* his life
	39,	1, *for* is equally *read* are equally
	51,	9, *for* affation *read* afflatus
	136,	18, *for* flock *read* flocks
	140,	7, for *which* read *not* in *Italics*

INTRODUCTION.

NOT only in a religious, but in a political point of view the well-being of a state depends greatly upon the due discharge of the sacerdotal office. If the priest be inattentive to his duty, the religion of the people will grow cool or corrupt, their moral conduct will become depraved, and the civil, as well as the ecclesiastical polity, will be in danger. "The priest," says Hooker, "is a pillar of that

Commonwealth, wherein he faithfully serveth God."

Political writers therefore we find frequently urging the necessity of providing for an ecclesiastical establishment in every well ordered government, and of enacting laws to insure the proper performance of ecclesiastical duty.

In this kingdom provision is made, both for inforcing, and rewarding, the exertions of the clergy; and at different times those set apart for the sacred office have been roused to a consideration of the responsible situation in which they are placed, by writers of their own body; some of the superior rank in the hierarchy have published their directions

tions and admonitions to the lower orders, and several of inferior degree have urged their brethren, upon considerations of the highest importance, to discharge their trust with fidelity.

Never was the attention of the clergy to every part of their duty, publick and private, more requisite than at the present time. Education is become so general amongst every class of the people in this nation, and the taste for pulpit composition in the middle ranks, so much more refined than it formerly was, that there are few congregations in which a very unskilful mode of reading the services of the Church, or a want of tolerable correctness in the lan-

guage and arrangement of a sermon, would pass unobserved: And the spirit of proselytism rages to such a degree amongst some bodies of dissenters, and those, the wildest and most dangerous, that the constant unremitted private labour of the pastor, is not more than sufficient to prevent even the well-inclined part of his flock being seduced from the doctrine and discipline of the Church.

These considerations induced me to employ a few leisure hours, in throwing together the following hints upon the discharge of the pastoral office. I was convinced the employment would be of advantage to myself, that it would

give

give me clearer and more correct ideas of my duty, and I likewise had some hope, the memoranda I should collect for my own use, might be of service, at least to the younger part of my brethren.

I was not ignorant, nor was I unmindful, that many excellent works had been written upon the subject; I had not forgotten my own obligation to those of a Burnet, a Patrick, a Hort, and Secker; and to several more modern charges and treatises upon the sacred office. But considering, that it was long since any collective body of pastoral advice had appeared in print, and that some change in the ecclesiastical

circumstances of the kingdom had taken place, I conceived I might be able to give a few hints on parochial matters, which were not to be found in former works of the same description; at all events, I trusted a new publication would awaken attention to a subject of the highest importance to our Church and nation.

I intend to comprise my hints in two chapters, one on the publick, the other on the private labours of the parochial clergy. Proposing to touch but lightly on the manners and habits of the parish-priest, I shall not appropriate a chapter to these heads, but shall give a little general advice upon the subject in this place.

The

The clergy are a distinct body of men, set apart for the service of the Church; it is therefore highly proper that they should be distinguished by some outward mark. The external garb of the priest, not only induces the respect of the people towards him, but it assists in awakening his own attention to the sacred commission he bears. The Almighty himself appointed particular habits for the priests of the Jewish, and a similar custom has been adopted by the Christian Church. Let then every one who has taken upon him the priestly office, conform in this as well as in every other matter, to the rules and ordinances of the Church. Let him

put on grave and decent apparel. The stile must be regulated by the situation in which he is placed; but whatever mode of dress may be suitable to his cure, it should be of such a description, as will not offend the eyes of those who ought to have the greatest respect for their minister.

That the clergy are men, and that some relaxation from labour is necessary to them, as well as to the rest of mankind, no one will deny; and whatever interest, or pleasure, a parish priest may take in the functions of his office, still there must be times and seasons for withdrawing himself from his common occupation. The bow will not bear to be always bent: sacred study may

may be his greatest amusement, and parochial visits may afford him sufficient bodily exercise, but some employment foreign to his general business, will be requisite to induce a different train of ideas, and, by relaxing his mind for a time, make it vigorous and active on the return to its usual occupations.

Amusement then is certainly allowable to the clergy; of course strictly innocent in the most extended sense of the term: and it should not only be innocent, but characteristic.—Of what particular amusements the relaxations of a clergyman should consist, I will not here inquire; all I wish to say upon the subject, is, that they

should be of a description, which will neither lessen him in the eyes of his flock, nor occupy that time and thought which ought to be appropriated to more serious and momentous concerns.

And these amusements, innocent, and clerical, and allowable as they may be in their nature, it will be understood, from what I have said, are to be *recreations* only: they must be taken with moderation, and not pursued with a degree of ardor, which will endanger ~~our~~ *his* becoming attached to them; or even make them appear in the eyes of ~~our~~ *his* parishioners, to be the *business* of ~~our~~ *his* ~~lives.~~ *life.*

I have, so long as my attention has been turned to the subject, considered

considered an intermixture of the clergy amongst every rank of society, of the greatest advantage to the religion and morals of the nation. The bishops associate with the peers, the subordinate clergy are in the habit of familiar intercourse with the middle ranks, and the parochial ministers, through the constant communication it is in their power to keep up with their parishioners, may always have an influence over the manners, and morals of the lower order.

An intermixture of the clergy with the laity I am persuaded is of the greatest consequence to the well ordering of society. Their presence, like that of females, gives a cast of propriety to social meet-

ings; and though, they may *sometimes* be constrained to witness an over-stepping the bounds of strict temperance, or decorum, yet they will in *general* perceive that respect paid to their order, which declares, what would be the consequence, if they were secluded by custom or inclination from the familiar intercourse, that now takes place between themselves and the laity.

Far from necessary therefore is it for the parish priest to decline that social communication with his neighbours, which may be of reciprocal advantage. Society will relax and unbend his mind after study and the labours of his office.—He may, at the tables of his

his lay neighbours, gain information in many branches of useful knowledge, and an insight into men and manners. And he may be an instrument, perhaps an unconscious instrument, of keeping mirth within the bounds of decency and decorum. But to do this he must be cautious in the selection of his companions; if he shews a partiality to, and keeps up an intimacy with men of known profligate habits; if he is continually joining their parties, and instead of restraining, approves their intemperance and ribaldry, he is so far from being of service, that he is of the greatest detriment to the cause of morality and religion; he makes the Christian

ministry

ministry give a sanction to those deeds, which the Christian religion declares will exclude all who practise them from any benefit in the atonement of Christ; he disgusts the sober part of his parish, renders his ministerial labours ineffectual, and perhaps drives some of his flock from the bosom of the Church.

It is not the part of the Christian minister, with pharisaical pride to refuse all communication with every one he may think not possessed of that genuine piety he could wish; to say, as it were, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou;" but he should carefully avoid a familiar intercourse with men, whose habits and manners render

render them, in the eye of the world, unfit companions for those who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Christian Church.

This will not bring the society of the parochial minister within too narrow a compass. Not a neighbourhood, I believe, is to be found which will not afford a sufficient number of proper associates for the clergy, and where the tables of the higher ranks of the laity are not open to every rank of ecclesiastics, whose conduct deserves the notice of the wise and good. Let me then urge my younger brethren, for the sake of the Christian Church, for the sake of the flocks particularly committed

mitted to their charge, for the sake of their own eternal welfare, to be cautious into what society they enter when they are just setting out in life. They may, and they will, if they conduct themselves properly, gain admittance into that society which is suited to their character, which will make them respected by their parishioners, and useful in their profession. If they form habits of intimacy with the intemperate and dissolute, they will exclude themselves from the friendship of the thinking and religious part of the neighbourhood; and instead of rendering their hours of relaxation subservient to the cause of religion and virtue, they will by

the sanction of their presence, lead their companions farther into sin and misery, and have a dreadful account to settle when their stewardship is inspected by that Master, whose service they have neglected, whose commands they have disobeyed, upon whose religion they have brought a scandal, and the work of whose enemy they have been performing and advancing.

The parochial minister should not only be attentive to his external deportment, to his dress, his amusements, and his society, but he should be careful to form habits which are useful and becoming the clerical character.

I would recommend in the first place

place regularity in his proceedings, to have, as far as circumstances will admit, fixed times and seasons for all his occupations, whether of business or relaxation. There can be no proper husbandry of that most precious of the talents intrusted to man, time, without rule and order. I have somewhere met with the following aphorism of the thrifty in worldly affairs, "Take care of the pence, the pounds will take care of themselves;" intimating that large expenditures will not be unnoticed, whilst smaller sums, without care and attention, will pass away unobserved. May we not parody this maxim very usefully on the present subject, and say, Take care

of

of the minutes, the days will take care of themselves. Indolent indeed must be that man who can suffer even one day to pass without an allotted employment; but many there are I believe whose time is generally and perhaps usefully engaged, that allow small portions of the day to glide away unoccupied, which might be profitably and pleasantly employed. Have times and seasons, not only for study, but for the different descriptions of study; there are some hours when the mind is more alert and better fitted for close application, and others more adapted to lighter reading; and always have a book at hand to fill up the straggling minutes. Much information

information may be gained in the course of the year from books, which a parochial minister cannot afford to make a part of his *studies*, and at times which would otherwise be lost to every good purpose.

There is a habit I strongly recommend my younger brethren to attain early in life; that is the habit of solitude; to be able, comfortably to pass a series of days without society. It will be understood, from what I have before said, that I by no means advise a seclusion from the world; far otherwise; all I recommend to a young divine, is that he should so interest himself in his home employments, that he shall feel no va-

cuity

cuity when, at times, they form his only engagements. The contrary habit tends to dissipate all serious thought. If when the mind grows a little weary, relief is immediately to be sought in company, and not in a change of home occupations, the inclination to those occupations will gradually diminish, and the labour as well as the study of the parochial minister, will dwindle down to the lowest possible proportion. This habit likewise leads to the most fatal consequences. The situation of most young men renders it highly improbable they can constantly find proper society; if therefore society is deemed indispensable, whither can such men go, but where the dereliction of their

their duty must hurry themselves, and their sanction and example hurry their companions, into certain destruction. Let me advise the young ecclesiastic, to encourage if he has, and endeavour to attain if he has not, a propensity to reading; by habit he will acquire a fondness for his books, and this habit will preserve him from the danger I have just pointed out, and it will be a source of profit and pleasure to him during his whole life.

The last hint I shall give to my younger brethren upon the subject of habit, but by no means the least important, is, to adopt the practice of self-examination. It

was the advice of Pythagoras to his pupils :

Μηδ' ὕπνου μαλακοισιν ἐπ' ὀμμασι πρόσ-
δέξασθαι
Πρὶν τῶν ἡμερινῶν ἔργων τρὶς ἑκαστον
ἐπελθεῖν.

Never to suffer their eyes to sleep nor their eyelids to slumber, before they had thrice reflected upon the actions of the past day.

Self-examination is a wholesome and useful exercise to every one. But to those who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Church, it is a highly important, if not a necessary duty, frequently to take a review of their conduct; "to call their ways to remembrance."

Con-

Consideration is the grand desideratum in the conduct of human life, and it ever has been. —"O that they were wise," says the Almighty of the children of Israel, through his servant Moses, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would *consider* their latter end." Few are ignorant of what they ought to do; but many are inattentive. Day after day closes upon great numbers, without one gleam of thought breaking in upon their minds, whether its occupation has been useful, or unprofitable, or hurtful; whether their time has been employed to the glory of God, and the good of their fellow creatures, or has been wasted

in

in idle or sinful dissipation; or what account they shall be able to give of its transactions at the great and general audit.

Whoever rigidly adheres to the practice of self-examination, will not, I think, deviate far from the way wherein he should walk. Conscience by this means kept always awake, and at her post, whenever indolence or the indulgence of personal gratification is tempting him to waste, or misapply, a day which should be devoted to useful employment, conscience will whisper an admonition in his ear; but should this prove ineffectual, when the internal monitor is placed in the seat of authority, and is called, at the close of the day to give judg-

ment upon its transactions, then her voice *will* be heard; and the sensations attendant upon her disapprobation, will be too uneasy to induce a repetition of that conduct, which occasioned them.

I do therefore earnestly recommend the custom of the heathen moralist, to the Christian pastor. Let him, ere he composes himself to rest at night, or before he goes forth from his chamber in the morning, recall the actions of the past day; try them by the rule of his duty, and pass an impartial judgment upon them.—"Passion will cease," says Seneca, "or become cool, when it knows it is every day to be called to account."

OF THE

PUBLIC DUTIES

OF THE

PAROCHIAL CLERGY.

THESE consist in reading the service of the Church—preaching—and catechising the children.

In reading the service of the Church, too much attention cannot be paid by the parochial minister. The people are in general disposed to make light of the prayers; and to consider the ad-

 vantage

vantage they are to receive from public worship, is to be derived chiefly from the sermon. This idea is much strengthened when the liturgy is read in a careless or unskilful manner; and no idea can be more erroneous.

It is most proper, indeed it is necessary, that the Christian pastor, set to watch for the souls of a parish, should explain the word of God to his flock, and enforce upon them the precepts of Scripture. But far, very far is the discourse of the preacher from superseding, or ranking higher than, the service of the Church. The order of Prayer prescribed by the Church of England, is itself a body of divinity. In it, all the doctrines, all the leading

ing principles, and all the precepts of our religion are summed up. The attentive hearer may in that learn his duty, and perform every part of public devotion.

Highly mistaken then are those, who rest their chief dependence, and pay the greatest or the only attention to the sermon. And this mistaken notion takes away from those who adopt it, a safeguard provided by our Church, and exposes them to great danger, especially in these days, when the Christian world is so split and divided. The hearer, who attends properly to the liturgy, will be guarded by a store of sound doctrine, of primitive Christian principles; and should the sermon not

be in unison with the prayers, he will be able to correct the sallies of the preacher, and preserve himself from doubt or error; whilst he who pays little or no attention to the service of the Church, will be tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

Let me then advise my younger brethren, to be particularly careful in the performance of this branch of their duty. Various endowments are requisite to form a good and a pleasing speaker; such as strength in the voice, correctness in the ear, and melodiousness in the tone; and these endowments are not bestowed upon all men: all men therefore cannot read, and speak, equally well. But where these gifts of nature are denied,

much

much may be done by care and attention. Let the reader understand what he is speaking, and be attentive to what he is doing, and however harsh may be his tone, and inharmonious his voice, the service will not fail to have a good effect upon his congregation. The most material defects I have observed in reading the prayers of the Church, have been a failure in the reader, of comprehending the service, and of attending to the solemn duty he was performing. Wherever I could perceive that the minister understood what he was reading, and had his mind impressed with the subject, there the excellent Liturgy of our Church appeared to have a good effect;

but with every assistance nature could afford, when the speaker, from his stops and emphases, discovered that he comprehended little of what came from his lips, and was unfeeling to every part of the service, there I have noticed all to be cold and lifeless: when the minister was unmoved, the congregation appeared to be without devotion.

"I do assure you," says Archbishop Hort, "there is no little skill required to read the public prayers as they ought to be read." Whatever skill may be required in reading the service of the Church, I am persuaded is within the ability of most men. I must repeat, that if the reader is thoroughly acquainted

quainted with the sense and drift of what he is reading, and his mind is impressed with the solemn duty he is performing, though he may speak ungracefully, he will not speak ineffectually.

If, when the minister is leading the congregation in the General Confession, his thoughts are turned to the weakness of human nature, the imperfection of man's best endeavours, and that through the merits and intercession of the Redeemer, upon confession of past sins, and resolution of amendment, we can alone hope for pardon and forgiveness; if he has these impressions upon his own mind, and a right apprehension of the excellent language in which these

sentiments are conveyed, he cannot fail of bringing the mind of an attentive hearer, to that humble and penitent frame suited to this part of our public devotion.

If the priest feels the high and solemn office with which he is invested, the goodness of God in granting pardon to repentant sinners, and the gracious promise of divine assistance to enable us to perform our part of the Christian Covenant, he will, I think, speak the Absolution with a dignity becoming his sacred embassy, tempered however with a humility befitting the frail condition of an *earthly messenger* even of the Almighty Himself.

The different portions of Scripture

ture in the Psalms, the Lessons, and the Epistles and Gospels, will be read with propriety, and will keep up the attention of the congregation, if the reader will take the pains to make himself well acquainted with the design and language of the sacred writers. If he fully comprehends, and feels himself, the prophetic effusions and pious resolutions of the royal Psalmist, the discourses of our blessed Lord, the interesting narratives of the Evangelists, and the forcible argumentative reasoning of St. Paul and the other inspired penmen of the Epistles, if he will so study these writings as to understand, and be attentive when he reads them, it is not the want of

strength or melody in the voice that will prevent their effect upon the hearers.

Let the same attention be given to the Collects and Prayers, and the effect will be the same.

The Litany I am persuaded must make an impression upon a congregation, when the minister himself is impressed with the excellent and forcible language of the petitions. When his own mind feels the necessity of begging our Lord and Saviour, "not to remember our offences, nor to take vengeance of our sins," "but to spare those whom he has redeemed with His most precious blood," his lips will not utter the supplication in a careless or ineffectual manner.

Nor will the solemn and energetic petition which concludes the deprecatory portion of the Litany, fail to be impressive upon the people, when the priest himself is sensible, how much he stands in need of divine aid under all the circumstances and in all the stages of his mortal career, in prosperity as well as adversity, and particularly that he will require the support and deliverance of his Lord and Saviour, "in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment."

The beautiful and comprehensive form of General Thanksgiving, cannot surely be spoken with impropriety by any minister, who thoroughly understands,

and

and feels the language and sentiments of that admirable composition.

Let me then once more press upon the younger clergy, the advantage, indeed the necessity, of reading the service of the Church with the greatest attention and devotion. The young divine who is endowed by nature with talents for speaking, must not suppose his own exertions are unnecessary; and those on whom these gifts are not bestowed with so liberal a hand, must use care and diligence to improve the few talents, with which they are intrusted. A parochial minister therefore should consider, that under whichever of the above descriptions he may rank,

rank, study and attention are equally requisite. The want of these will not be compensated by a good voice, and a melodious tone; and by study and attention, a less pleasing delivery may be made effectual to the most beneficial purposes. Let the minister fully comprehend the language and sentiments of the service of our Church, and be intent upon the solemn office he is performing, and whatever may be his natural talent for speaking, he will, I am persuaded, read with that correctness in stop and emphasis, that distinct and deliberate, yet not tedious delivery, and that proper tone from a creature to the Creator, which will communicate to his congregation

tion a becoming frame and disposition of mind.

The next branch of the parochial minister's duty is preaching, and if properly performed, it is a most useful part of his public labours. In his discourses from the pulpit, the servant of Christ is to explain the doctrines, and enforce the precepts of his divine Master. The different seasons appointed by the Church, for commemorating the different remarkable events in the life of our blessed Lord, afford him opportunity of calling the attention of his congregation to the leading doctrines of our religion.

The four weeks set apart for considering the ADVENT of the Redeemer, he may well employ in the

the manner pointed out by the Church; in, preparing the minds of his flock, to make a proper use of the approaching celebration of the *first coming* of Christ, by turning their reflections to His *second coming* to judge the world.

Following the order of the Collects he may begin with urging them to pray for the grace of God, and to use their own exertions, "that they may cast away the works of darkness and put upon them the armour of light," in full assurance that their Redeemer will sit in judgment upon them; that the same Jesus, who with unbounded humility came down from Heaven, to visit and bring salvation to mankind, will in the last

day, come again in power and great glory, to reward every one according to his deeds; that they who have worked the works of darkness here, will have their portion with the devil and his angels hereafter; but all who have walked as children of light, will "rise to the life immortal."

He may on the next Sunday direct the attention of his congregation to the Holy Scriptures; not to the mere perusal of them, but shewing the necessity of applying the mind, "to mark and inwardly digest them," he may impress upon his flock that by patient application they will receive such inward comforts from God's Holy Word, as will lead them on from strength

strength to strength, and give them the best hope of man, the blessed hope of everlasting life.

On the third Sunday in Advent, the Church awakens the attention of her members to the duty, and the proposed effects, of the Christian ministry. The pastor may on this day explain the nature of the ministerial office, and urge upon his flock the necessity of *their* co-operation in the highly important work to which *he* is called; that the minister and steward of Christ, may open to the people the great mystery of godliness; he may prepare and make ready the way, but unless they will add to this preparation, and to the assistance God gives them through the Holy Spirit,

Spirit, their earnest endeavours to keep their disobedient hearts in the way of God's laws, and in the work of his commandments, when He who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost shall appear at the end of the world, they will not be found acceptable in his sight.

Still looking to the same object, the impressing upon Christians the design and end of Christ's coming into the world, namely, to cause mankind to be holy here, that they may be happy hereafter, the minister may, like the Church, conclude Advent with instructing his parishioners from the pulpit, to beg the help of God in working out that salvation, the merits and sufferings

ferings of the Redeemer have procured for them; that through His help they may so run as to obtain the prize, an inheritance in Christ's kingdom in heaven. He may explain to his flock, that they can do nothing of themselves, but they can do every thing through Christ who strengthens them. They must, and will, be sore let and hindered by the spiritual enemy in their mortal career, but greater is He that is for, than he that is against them; and that if they use earnest prayer, and their own endeavours, the bountiful grace and mercy of God will make them conquerors, through the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and our Lord and Saviour.

The

The nativity of the Redeemer, with all the circumstances and effects attending it, will furnish matter for discourses during the season of CHRISTMAS. Not only may the accounts given by the Evangelists, of the birth of Jesus, compared with the predictions of the prophets, be brought forward to prove that our Blessed Lord was the promised Deliverer, but the joyful *results* of these glad tidings may be enlarged upon: that man dead in trespasses and sins, received in the birth of his Saviour a new birth to life and immortality, regenerate, and born again, by admission into the Christian covenant, he became the child of God by adoption; and, attended continually

tinually by the Holy Spirit, he may through faith and obedience, attain eternal happiness.

At the EPIPHANY the minister may shew to his flock, how full the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon them; how the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ has shone round them from their cradle, and therefore it is incumbent upon them to walk as children of light.

The season of LENT marks itself as the proper time to enforce the doctrine of repentance; to declare the mercy of God to the truly repentant sinner, and the vengeance threatened in the Scripture to the hardened and impenitent.

GOOD FRIDAY, "a day to be much

much observed," when the Son of God, giving up the ghost on the cross, "finished" the redemption of man, will naturally suggest to the mind of the pastor, suitable meditations to be recommended to his flock. Let me however hint to the young parochial minister, that in these times, it will be expedient to press strongly on his people, the necessity of Christ's *atoning sacrifice* to man's salvation; that all had through Adam's transgression become children of wrath, and must have perished without the gracious intervention of a *divine* Redeemer.

The events which occurred to the Redeemer of fallen man from his

his expiring upon the cross till he was seen to go up into heaven, with the wonderful circumstances attending them, afford ample matter for discourses through the season of EASTER. The death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord are Christian doctrines, necessary to be explained, and enlarged upon, to a Christian congregation; and the conversations of our blessed Saviour with his apostles and disciples, toward the close of his ministry, are so interesting, that the well-furnished pastor can be at no loss for instruction to his flock at this time.

The remarkable, and highly important events of the day of Pentecost, which first witnessed the de-

scent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, to guide *them*, by an *extraordinary inspiration* into all truth, and to assist with his *ordinary influence every disciple* of Christ in *every age*, will plainly point to the subject of the WHITSUNDAY's discourse.

In these days, when so many erroneous notions respecting spiritual influence are abroad, the watchful pastor, sound in the faith once delivered to the saints, and attentive to the high charge committed to his trust, will deem it his indispensable duty, to take this opportunity of laying before his flock explicitly, and unequivocally, what is revealed to us in the Scripture concerning the operations of the Holy Spirit, to be expectcd

pected at this time; that the extraordinary aid hath ceased, and that we are now to look only for that assistance of the Blessed Spirit, promised and afforded to every Christian, and to be no otherwise perceived than by the *fruits* of the Spirit; that our perception of the afflatus in the spiritual life, is similar to that of the wind in the operations of nature. We *know* the *wind blows* because it *removes objects* opposed to it, and *purifies* the atmosphere; so we are *assured* the *Holy Spirit operates* when we perceive that it *removes* the works of the *flesh*, adultery, fornication, variance, wrath, and heresies; and *produces* in the *subject* love, peace,

long-suffering, faith, meekness and temperance.

The Sunday after Whitsunday is appropriated by the Church, to consider the doctrine of the TRINITY. This subject may be thought by some too abstruse for a common congregation; but surely as a doctrine, and a material doctrine, of the Christian Church, it is necessary to be laid before the people. A minister will not, I think, do his duty if he withhold from them so essential a branch of the Christian faith. Completely to unfold a mystery is a contradiction in terms; to attempt to be wise beyond that which is written is folly; but whatever Scripture reveals to us should

should be declared to an assembly of Christians; and enough is revealed, to assure us that there is one God, and, in the Godhead are three Persons. We have ample testimony in Holy Writ, of the existence, and the distinction in person, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; of their equality in omnipotence, omniscience, and other divine attributes; and of the exertion of the different persons in the Godhead, for different benefits to man. All this may, I think, be so laid before a congregation of ordinarily endowed Christians, as to give them as much real information upon the subject as perhaps their more enlightened brethren pos-

sess; and may be so practically summed up, as to impress their minds with the duty of giving thanks to God the Father, for His goodness in creating them; to God the Son, for His mercy in redeeming them; and to God the Holy Ghost, for His kindly influence to sanctify and enable them to work out their salvation—to cause them to join with heart as well as voice in praying that the Holy, Blessed and Glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, would have mercy upon them miserable sinners.

With Trinity Sunday, the Church in the Collects, Epistles and Gospels closes her doctrinal instruction; and from thence to the return of Advent, appropriates them

them to practical Christianity. The parochial minister cannot perhaps follow a better rule. Having in the former part of the year fully instructed his flock in the doctrines, let him in the latter part enforce upon them the duties of the Gospel.

Some years ago an outcry was raised against the great body of the clergy for preaching too much on the subject of morals, and neglecting the leading doctrines of the Gospel. The outcry I fear was raised with no good intention, and the charge I am persuaded was, in general, without foundation. I believe however, sober churchmen were at that time so disgusted with the sermons of some preachers,

who were unceasingly bringing forward certain doctrines for the sake of perverting them, that there were parochial ministers who, through fear of running into this, were verging toward the opposite extreme: in avoiding the whirlpool they approached perhaps rather too near the rock; they allotted more than the just proportion of their discourses to the preceptive part of Christianity. But the morals insinuated in the accusation, the morality of the heathen philosopher, the rule of duty to be practised by men without relation to the Almighty Jehovah, I believe seldom if ever formed a subject for the Christian preacher. It is the duty of the parish priest to discourse,

discourse, and largely to discourse upon morality—the morals of the Gospel—that rule of conduct to be practised by a Christian toward his neighbour and himself, enjoined by our blessed Lord, and enforced by the assurance of future reward or punishment.

Let the watchful pastor by no means be negligent in the *doctrinal* part of his instruction; in declaring to his congregation the whole Christian scheme. But let him not forbear to appropriate, in whatever manner he sees best, a due portion of his discourses to the *practical* part of Christianity. Let him impress strongly upon the minds of his hearers, that the redemption of man is a covenant,—

a *promise* with *condition*: a gracious indeed and merciful covenant, a promise on the part of God, *unmerited* in the smallest degree by *man*, graciously and freely to give eternal happiness to mankind on *condition*, that they believe in Jesus and obey his commands, and that his commands enjoin His disciples to live in the constant practice of those *moral rules* prescribed by God under the Law, and confirmed, extended, and spiritualized by our Saviour under the Gospel.

Such is the general plan I recommend for the discourses of the year; namely to devote the period from ADVENT to TRINITY Sunday to *doctrinal*, and from thence to the

the return of ADVENT to *practical* subjects.

A question then arises, how is the young divine to furnish himself with sermons? Is he to depend intirely upon his own compositions or to seek assistance from the compositions of others?—There is I believe scarcely a young man who, upon his first entering into the Church, possesses a stock of divinity and a facility in composition, sufficient to produce even one sermon every week of such matter, and in such language, as he would wish to deliver before a moderately well informed congregation, without bestowing upon his discourses that time which should be employed in other branches of his

duty, equally useful and necessary. This preparation for his public, would greatly interfere with the private labours of the parish priest; he would doubtless attend to the particular calls of the sick and distressed, but he must omit much of the constant attention from the pastor to his flock, which I deem indispensable to the proper performance of the ministerial office. But if it did not interfere with this part of his duty, every moment appropriated to the study would be employed in composition, he would be constantly at work upon his stock of knowledge at a time when he should be increasing his store: for let a young man be ever so industrious before

before his ordination, he will still be in want of much professional information after that period. In the early part of his ministry, he should allot a portion of his time to the study of divinity. Many professional subjects there are in which he must proceed step by step, to which he must turn his thoughts as his knowledge increases and his mind opens. All these necessary duties must be neglected if his whole time and attention is occupied in preparing for the Sunday's discourses.

I do therefore think it is not only allowable, but advisable that a young parochial minister, when he is first ordained to his cure, should take assistance from the sermons

sermons of others; let him raise his own stock by degrees, and during that time let him procure good and plain discourses, and study them so as to enter into the spirit and drift of the authors: he will by this means not only make them in a great measure his own in the delivery, but if he selects with judgment, they will be a useful study to him in composition. But although I advise my young friends to seek *assistance*, I by no means recommend them to be *intirely dependent* upon others for their discourses. However unfavourable may be their talent for composition, and how much soever they may be occupied by their parochial labours, let some portion

portion of their time be allotted to compose sermons; exercise in composition will encrease the facility, and their compositions will very much assist them more effectually to perform the parochial part of their duty. "Reading," says Lord Bacon, "maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man." Writing makes a man exact not only in his language but in his train of thought: nothing gives such clear and correct ideas upon a subject as putting down the thoughts on paper. When a pastor in visiting his flock is required to speak upon any topic, he will find great advantage if that topic has been the subject of a sermon he has composed.

posed. His mind will be better stored, than it otherwise would have been, with weighty and proper arguments, and he will have a greater flow of language to enforce them.

Let then the parish priest, so soon as he enters upon his office, begin to compose a few sermons upon the leading doctrines and duties of Christianity. On doctrinal points he may begin with 1st The necessity and the efficacy of true repentance. 2ndly, The nature of the Christian covenant, shewing the extent of redemption on the part of God, and the conditions required on the part of man. 3dly, The obligation of complying with the ordinances of our Saviour

viour, particularly pressing the partaking of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

In practical Christianity he will perhaps find honesty and brotherly love, as duties to our neighbour, temperance and chastity as duties to ourselves, subjects of the most general utility in his private labours. On these and such topics of Christian doctrine and morals, I strongly recommend every young divine to put down his thoughts in the form of sermons. This will train him to a facility in composition, it will give him the habit of thinking, and it will furnish him with matter and language to discourse on points upon

upon which he will frequently be called to speak.

Is he required to attend the sick bed of a worldly Christian, who content to give the forms and ceremonies of religion to God, has allowed his heart and affections to be engrossed by the interests and pleasures of this life, and who perhaps has indulged in vices, which although unrestrained by the laws of man, yet will incur a heavy penalty from the righteous Judge of all the earth, before whose tribunal he must one day stand? his sermon upon repentance will come to his aid; he will have language and arguments to declare with perspicuity the nature, and to urge with force the necessity

necessity, of true repentance; to shew that the only certain sign of repentance is amendment, and that unless we do turn from our evil ways we shall not save our souls alive.

Should he be summoned to a repentant sinner sinking under the weight of his former iniquities, fearing that his sins are too many, and too grievous to be forgiven; having collected his thoughts upon the atonement of our Lord, and thrown them into language for the pulpit, he will be enabled to enter fully into the subject—to speak comfort to the wounded spirit—to cheer the humble and sincere penitent—to assure him that Christ died to save *all* sinners, who *so*

repent

repent of their sins as to *forsake* them, and who *so believe* in Jesus as to *follow* his *precepts.*

There is no duty of more high and positive obligation, than that of complying with the ordinance of our Saviour in attending the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and yet it is a duty much neglected. This is a subject therefore upon which the parish priest will have frequently to speak; a subject upon which he should always be ready to throw in a word when opportunity offers. To the sick he will sometimes have to explain the nature of the Institution, and the necessity of complying with it, to prepare them in a short time and under the distraction of pain and

and weakness, for the first observance of that earnest request, and express command of their Saviour. Let the parochial minister reflect upon this, and he will perceive the propriety of using every means to make himself master of the subject; to have matter for a long conversation if required, and to be able to compress, if necessity demand it, all the material parts of his discourse into a narrow compass.

To the healthy as well as to the sick a few hints upon Christian morals are often requisite, and may often be given with advantage, in the walks of the village pastor. His practical discourses will furnish him with matter and language for

for friendly admonitions of this kind. Let me then repeat, that whatever press of other business may crowd upon the young parochial minister, I recommend him to find time early to prepare for the pulpit a few sermons, on the doctrinal and practical subjects, upon which he will have such frequent calls to discourse in his private ministerial duties.

The intent of a discourse from the pulpit, is to explain the doctrines and enforce the duties of religion. Upon a subject of such high importance, it behoves the preacher to be careful his sermon is so arranged, as to make his instruction intelligible, and to assist the recollection of his hearers.

For

For this purpose a few divisions are useful, indeed necessary; but numerous divisions and sub-divisions, confuse the composition, and perplex the auditors. No general rule can be laid down; some subjects require more divisions, some fewer; but care should be taken on the one hand, to admit no more than are needful, and on the other hand to guard against that uninterrupted flow, "which," as archbishop Hort observes, "glides like a smooth stream over the soul, leaving no traces behind it." A discourse from the pulpit cannot, I think, in general be effectual to the purpose for which it is intended, namely, to explain a portion of Scripture and draw practical

practical inferences from it which may be useful to the hearers in future life, if it consist of less than three divisions. First, An Exordium or opening to shew the meaning and general drift of the text. Secondly, The body of the sermon, wherein the particular doctrine or duty in the contemplation of the preacher is to be explained and illustrated, and Lastly, the Application, to bring home to the congregation the particular point he wishes to enforce upon their belief or practice. The language of a sermon cannot be too *plain*, but it may be too *familiar*; for in our discourses from the pulpit the mode of speech should be more close

close and dignified than when we speak, even on the same subjects, at other times and in other places. The *texture* of a sermon, if I may so express myself, should be *firm*—the expressions nervous—the style didactic not colloquial. But whilst the preacher shuns *familiarity*, let him take *simplicity* as his guide, particularly in the explanatory part of his discourse; and even in the application, which will admit, as Bishop Burnet says, of "such tender touches as may soften, and such deep gashes as may awaken the hearers," "yet in this," as the same author observes, "he should be clear and short, very weighty, and free from any thing that looks like the affectation of wit and elo-

quence; here the preacher must be all heart and soul, designing the good of his people."

If a young divine has composed his discourse, he will not often speak it ill; most men deliver their own sentiments naturally, with proper emphases and proper stops. If he takes the composition of another, let him study it thoroughly, so as to enter into the views of the author, the drift and force of his arguments, and he will seldom fail to interest his congregation.

The next duty of the minister I shall mention is catechising the children. This is a mixt duty, being both of a public and a private nature. The children are, according

cording to the rules of the Church, to be publicly catechised during some part of the year. It is highly useful both to young and old, to give at this time an explanatory lecture upon that excellent summary of doctrinal and practical Christianity. The parochial minister however must not satisfy himself with catechising the children in public, and preaching his catechetical discourses; by adding his private exertions, the advantage of his public labours will be greatly increased. He should take some method of examining in private, whether those young persons who are advancing to riper age, understand what they repeat. In early years all we must expect in

teaching the catechism, is to store the memory of the young Christian with sound doctrine and pure precept; and when the understanding opens, these will be brought into use and practice. As therefore the minds of our young charges expand, our instruction should keep pace with their expansion; we should excite, and increase the thirst after religious knowledge, and assist in the attainment of it. Many excellent expositions of the Church Catechism are in print; the best I have seen, is "The Church Catechism broke into short Questions;" very full, and at the same time plain, and comprehensible by ordinary capacities; admirably adapted to

give

give the younger Christians a knowledge of their religion, and to lead them to the practice of its duties. But I fear in too many instances, this, like the Catechism, is repeated merely by rote. The only method, in my opinion, of ascertaining whether the children who are arrived at an age to understand the Catechism, do comprehend it, and of leading them to reflection, is to vary the questions in such a manner that the answers required must be given in their own words; an exercise of this kind will imprint on their minds as well as on their memories, the rudiments of Christianity; it will train them to the habit of thought, and of that description of thought

which is of the greatest importance to their best interests; it will cause them to reflect upon the existence and omnipotence of the Creator, the merciful and gracious plan of man's redemption through the Divine Mediator, and the aid afforded by the Holy Spirit to enable him to overcome the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to exert an earnest and constant endeavour to obey the precepts of the Gospel.

There is another branch of the parish priest's duty, which like that I have just mentioned, demands both his public and private exertions. I mean the preparing young persons for confirmation. This like the publicly catechising the children

children, is an opportunity not to be lost, of impressing upon his whole flock, old as well as young, the nature and obligations of the Christian Covenant. Whenever therefore the Bishop gives notice of his intention to confirm the young persons in the parish who are properly qualified, the minister should make this rite, with all its attendant doctrines and duties, the subject of his discourses. But this is not all, he must use his exertion to bring the candidates for confirmation to him as early as possible, that he may learn the extent of their knowledge, and privately instruct the more ignorant. The intent and purpose of this rite are easily explained, and most of

the candidates I have examined, whose religious education had not been totally neglected, if they did not understand the nature and design of Confirmation, I have found readily to comprehend a short explanation of it. They have appeared to be sensible, they were themselves to enter into the engagements made for them at their baptism, and what these engagements were; that renouncing all sin and wickedness, they were to believe the doctrines, and obey the precepts of the Gospel.

At the age for Confirmation, young persons are just entering the most important and dangerous period of their lives. In the height of youthful ardor, they are going

going to encounter the temptations of the world; and the thoughts and habits of a few years at this time, generally give a bias to the future conduct. Let the careful pastor by no means lose the opportunity now afforded him, of urging upon this part of his flock, the necessity of the greatest consideration, and watchfulness; to press upon them, the observance of religious duties, and carefully to avoid the company of the dissolute, and the haunts of intemperance. And particularly let him earnestly recommend them to take the first opportunity of attending the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The too common neglect of this sacred ordinance, is, I am persuaded,

greatly owing to young persons not presenting themselves at the Holy Table so soon as confirmed. They postpone the duty from time to time, until they turn their backs upon the Altar without compunction or consideration—or groundless fears arise—or they are drawn into that course of life, which is no unreasonable or imaginary hindrance to their spiritually partaking of the body and blood of the Redeemer. But if as soon as qualified they receive this sacrament, all these consequences will most probably be avoided: they will experience the comfort, and continue in the habit of a constant attendance at the Lord's Supper. Having a knowledge of the nature of the

the institution, they will not be disturbed by groundless fears; and the consideration generally induced by this act of devotion, with the blessing we may expect upon the use of an appointed means of grace, will preserve them from those sins which render them unfit to approach the Table of their Lord on earth, and will render them equally unfit to be inhabitants of his kingdom in Heaven.

OF THE

PRIVATE LABOURS

OF THE

PAROCHIAL CLERGY.

"He understands but little of the nature and obligations of the priestly office," says Bishop Burnet, "who thinks he has discharged it by performing the public appointments."

Various certainly, and of the highest importance are the private duties of the parish priest. To visit the

the sick—to pay attention to the schools where children of the lower orders are instructed—and above all, to keep up that intercourse with his parishioners which will give him an insight into their manners and habits, should form a considerable part of his occupation.

The visiting the sick stands foremost amongst the private labours of the parochial minister. An inspired writer, one of the Apostles, who conversed with our Blessed Lord after His resurrection upon the things concerning His kingdom, has left a direction, that when Christians are visited with sickness, they shall send for their spiritual guides; "Is any sick

sick among you," says St. James, "let him call for the elders of the Church and let them pray over him." And our Church has enjoined her clergy not only to attend on such occasions, but to resort to those who are by them known to be dangerously sick. (Canon 67.)

The attentive pastor, therefore, will not wait till he is summoned, but on the first intimation that one of his flock is indisposed, he will consider that there his duty calls, and thither he will repair. Nor will he content himself with going through the appointed offices in a perfunctory manner, with merely reading the visitation prayers, or administering the Sacrament of the Lord's

Lord's Supper. He will consider this is an opportunity of giving that spiritual advice of which, from his knowledge of the patient, he may be aware he stands in need. —This is sometimes a season of advantage that may never return, a favourable minute for fighting the grand adversary with his own weapons, and gaining a victory over him. The great *enemy* of the soul, we learn from Scripture, is constantly walking about, seeking and watching for every moment of weakness to ensnare mankind. *His power* is now weakened, all earthly considerations are vanishing from the sight of a being, who feels perhaps, for the first time, that he is mortal. Let the minister seize this

this fortunate, this favourable hour, given to him for pressing upon his parishioner the importance of religion, and opening a way for the wandering sheep to return into the path of piety and virtue. When such an opportunity occurs, of awakening to a sense of his duty the transgressor of God's laws, or rousing the attention of a careless Christian, it should not be allowed to pass by; returning health may harden a heart softened only by sickness; and a hasty summons at a future period may arrive, when the lamp is in an equally untrimmed state, and, when there is no time to provide oil.

To the sinner and the worldly minded, the presence of the parish priest

priest is particularly necessary in the time of sickness, to urge upon the one the necessity of repentance, and to shew the other the folly of that indifference in his spiritual concerns, which he so anxiously avoids in his temporal affairs. To the former, let the minister of God declare, how plainly and explicitly the divine wrath is denounced in Scripture against a life of wickedness, against wilful habitual sin; that God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and that none shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but those who work righteousness. Upon the latter let him strongly impress this momentous truth, that the Almighty must be served "with a perfect

a perfect heart and a willing mind," that although no particular vice may lie heavy on his conscience, yet this will not atone for the absence of every active virtue and of all vital religion—that God and mammon cannot be served at the same time; two masters whose commands are so diametrically opposite, cannot be obeyed. If we hold to the god of this world, we must despise the God of Heaven. By a fond attachment to earthly things, we break the first and great commandment of loving the Lord our God with all the mind, and soul, and strength. Upon both however should be carefully inculcated, that whenever the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness

ness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive; that no truly repentant sinner is rejected by our heavenly Father, the returning prodigal is received with complacency, and even with satisfaction; that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. This is the time for him who is set to watch for the souls of his parishioners, to discourse both upon the terrors and upon the mercies of the Lord, to use every method to persuade the *nominal* to become a *real* Christian. This is a time when he must be heard, and when he will most probably be attended to; the power of the spiritual enemy is, as I have before

before observed, in a great degree fallen, and the spiritual guide is placed upon the vantage ground.

Though the presence of the pastor is most necessary to this description of his sick parishioners, and though success will generally attend his labours, yet sometimes the good seed will be scattered on very unfavourable soils; it will lie neglected on the mind hardened by a too close adherence to the world, and it will barely meet with a reception from the dull and stony heart: his advice he will find in some cases received with indifference, and his prayers joined in with coldness.

These uncomfortable visits however, will be compensated by his atten-

attendance upon the virtuous, devout, sensible part of his flock. He will frequently experience the satisfaction of sitting at the side of a pious Christian, called by the will of his Heavenly Father to suffer under disease or sorrow, humbling himself beneath the chastizing hand of God, and resigned to all the dispensations of his providence. He will find him viewing with indifference the things which merely concern this world, and fixing his mind upon the things eternal; looking back with comfort upon a life spent in an earnest endeavour to please God, and forward with hope, that through the merits of the Redeemer, he shall enjoy

enjoy a state of rest and peace in Christ's kingdom in Heaven.

Here the labour is sweet; all is comfort; the temporal circumstances of the sufferer must awaken a sympathetic sorrow, but the prospect into the eternal state of his parishioner, will cause the well-instructed pastor, to sorrow with such a hope as will turn his mourning into joy.

Often have I met in the humble cottage with that religious polish, if I may so express myself, which would not have disgraced a more exalted situation; I mean that calm resignation to the will of Heaven, which neither on the one hand repines under pain of

body,

body, or anguish of mind, nor on the other hand, with a boisterous fortitude, resists, as it were, the chastisements of the Lord. This mind, and this manner truly characteristic of the gentle Christian, I have found under the lowly roof of the cottager as well as in the mansion of his more wealthy neighbour. The hours passed with this part of our flocks do, (as no doubt the will of our Blessed Master is that they should) repay us for the painful moments we experience with those of a different description.

Under these circumstances we should be very careful whilst we pay attention to the former, that we do not neglect the latter; we must

must by no means cast off all hope even of the most profligate and obstinate; if we are not instant out of season, let us be urgent in season; let us take every favourable opportunity of rousing the thoughtless and the sinner to a sense of their duty. Our chief attention however must be given to the religious part of our parishes; this portion of our flocks alone it is which will admit of our constant attendance: and here likewise we have to guard against partiality; the manners and habits of some will be more engaging and pleasant than those of others, though all may have an equal claim to our fostering care, and receive equal comfort and advantage

tage from our visits. Upon all the virtuous and devout then, whatever may be their personal deportment, or domestic arrangements, let us bestow equal attention; let us shew the same earnestness and solicitude for their temporal and eternal welfare.

It is not upon the sick in body only that the attendance of the spiritual guide is required, it is by no means less useful and necessary to those who are under the pressure of mental affliction. When the sources of our enjoyment in this world dry up, from no earthly well can we draw the waters of comfort; in vain will the wounded mind seek relief in dissipation; it must look for con-

solation to the living water, which religion alone can give. To apply this remedy is the office of the minister of religion. His part it is to remind the sufferer, that with whatever calamity he is visited, it comes from the hand of the Almighty; that all His dispensations are wise, all are merciful; that although they may at present be grievous, yet they will in the end work together for good, if we serve, and love, and obey God; if we submit with resignation to all his disposals, and say with holy Job, "blessed be the name of the Lord."

The sick in mind as well as body, let me repeat, are under the peculiar care of the parochial minister,

nister; and therefore let me hint to my younger brethren, that in the most common, and the heaviest calamity which befalls man in this mortal state, the loss of those upon whom he is dependent for a large portion of his earthly happiness, they will often find a few visits most comfortable and beneficial. The removal of a companion, a counsellor, or a guide, is always a bitter part of the Lord's cup; and sometimes it pleases God, for wise and good purposes, to pour out his cup to the dregs; to take away what he has given, with aggravated circumstances of affliction. Here it requires all the aid of religion to support the sufferers. This aid it is the duty of the parish priest to

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administer, and the attentive Shepherd, who knows his flock, and is known of them, will generally be able to do it with success. That voice which has been accustomed to sooth their less weighty cares, that well-known voice, will now be able to speak comfort to the agitated and troubled mind. Whenever therefore death has made a chasm in a family, especially under peculiar circumstances of distress, the parochial minister should throw himself in the way of giving the only consolation that can be afforded in such a case. If he perceives his listening to the tale of woe gives relief to the mourner, and his discourse raises the mind to the only source of peace and comfort,

comfort, his reward, from the inward satisfaction he experiences, will be great; should he be unsuccessful, he may still rest satisfied that he has done his part.

Having mentioned what I conceive to be the duty of the pastor in his general conduct to his parishioners, under the various distresses to which they are subject in their passage through this world, I will proceed to give a few hints relating to those particular duties of the ministerial office, for which the Church more expressly directs him to attend the sick: these are, "to pray over them," and to administer to them the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The form of prayer, ordered by

our Church to be used in visiting the sick, is most excellent. It is admirably calculated to impress upon the mind of the sick Christian, the power, and providence, and the infinite mercies of the Almighty; and to make him bow with humble submission under the correcting hand of God, in imitation of his crucified Redeemer. It leads him to prepare for the termination of his distemper, whatever that termination may be. Should the Almighty see fit to restore him to health, it reminds him, that he must devote the residue of his life to the service of his Heavenly Father and Benefactor; but should the warning voice prove a summons to quit this world, it instructs him

him to pray, that God in his infinite mercy would, and to act in such a manner, that a God of infinite justice may, take him into his favour, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

This excellent form should by no means be neglected; but still the parochial minister may seek other assistance in this part of his duty. Many diseases and infirmities continue a great length of time; and in these cases his attendance is long required: a change of devotion is then very desirable. There are likewise particular afflictions of body and of mind, which call for particular prayers. For these purposes I recommend "The Clergyman's Companion in

visiting the Sick." In this collection are prayers adapted to different occasions; and there are few circumstances either in those evils that happen to the body, or the moral evils that assault and hurt the soul, to which the minister will not find some appropriate form of devotion. The prayers are all plain and impressive; and I have found the best effects from using them; they have appeared to comfort the mind under bodily affliction, and to lead it to those meditations which were likely to be of permanent service. The young pastor will, I think, find this book a valuable companion in his parochial walks.

There are few Christians, who have

have been in the habit of attending the Lord's Table, that are not desirous of receiving the Sacramental bread and wine, when a severe illness portends an approaching dissolution. To this the minister is, of course, ready to accede. He should however go a step farther, and recommend this duty whilst the patient's body and mind are equal to the exertion. It surely must be well pleasing in the sight of God, openly to declare, in this manner, a continued faith in the Redeemer to our latest hour; to employ the closing scene of life, in this compliance with the affectionate desire, and positive injunction, of our Blessed Saviour.

Too often, however, is the paro-

chial minister called to the sick bed of a professed disciple of Christ, who has lived many years in the total neglect of this Christian duty. A favourable opportunity now offers, to urge the necessity of obeying this command of his Saviour;—to point out that the LORD'S SUPPER is a *Sacrament*, and equally obligatory upon us with BAPTISM;—that it was not only instituted for a continual *remembrance* of Christ's sacrifice for us, but is one of *His appointed means* of *Salvation*;—that we are told, by our Blessed Lord himself, "unless we eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, we have no life in us." Now the interesting account of our Lord's last

last Supper with his disciples, when in the most clear and positive manner he instituted this sacred ordinance, will excite attention; it will probably strike with force and conviction, and he who through careless indifference, or on account of inadmissible excuses, has heretofore turned his back upon the Lord's Table, may, if he survives, become in future a regular communicant.

Let the parish priest therefore consider, that his duty to the sick, in respect of the Lord's Supper, is not only to administer it to those who are desirous of this comfortable Sacrament, but to explain the nature of the ordinance to the ignorant, and to urge the necessity

of complying with the command of our Redeemer, upon those who have perhaps, to a late period of their lives, neglected this necessary means of salvation.

There is a description of persons in every parish besides the absolutely sick, which calls for the attention of the pastor; I mean those who though not under the influence of disease, yet from age or infirmity, are unable to attend the public service of the Church. To these the Church should in some measure be carried; the parochial minister should, as often as the extent and population of his parish will admit, visit them, read some of the prayers of the Liturgy to them, and discourse with them upon

on religious subjects. He will always find they receive comfort from these visits, and generally advantage. Their minds will be kept in a proper frame for that change to which they are approaching; and they will by this means be kept, not only in righteousness of life, but, most probably, in the *unity* of the *Church*.

The assistance given by the minister to his sick parishioners, should not be confined to prayer and conversation; much aid may be given them through books. There are many small tracts he may give away, and some larger works he may lend, when occasion calls for them. These may be procured on easy terms by subscribers

scribers to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge; and if the circumstances of the minister are such, that he cannot himself conveniently bear this expence, in most parishes I trust there will be found those, whose opulence will make them able, and their regard to the spiritual wants of the poor will make them willing, to furnish the necessary supply.

To the industrious labourer who is confined to his house by illness, a book is a great treasure. Unaccustomed to idleness, he feels in a peculiar manner the tediousness of sickness; a book relieves the weariness, and thus comes in the form of a friend;—he has now leisure for consideration;—sickness likewise

wise softens his mind, and opens his prospect to eternity. Under all these circumstances, favourable to religious influence, a plain and well written tract will sink deep into the heart, and the impression, most probably, will never be effaced.

The next subject which requires the parochial minister's attention, is the education of the lower order of his parishioners. Where there is an endowed school, the clergyman is generally one of the trustees; in that case, he, no doubt, feels himself called upon to use every exertion that a proper master may be appointed, and then to watch over the master's conduct. But although there may be no endowment

dowment in the parish, yet I do think it is the duty of the minister, to take care that the education of the poor, over which he may always have a sufficient influence, is properly conducted. His presence in the schools, at no long intervals, and at uncertain times, will prevent negligence; and it will prevent an improper education in religious matters. The law most properly allows every man to worship God, and to educate his children, in that way he judges will best conduce to their temporal and eternal welfare. Far be it therefore from the parochial minister, to interfere with sectarian schools. But we too frequently find persons, who openly professing themselves

selves members of the Church, are secretly promoting schism. Many of these set up schools for the lower ranks in society, and instill into the younger minds unsound doctrines, and wild notions. The Catechism of our Church is totally neglected, or lightly esteemed; and the prayers of our Liturgy being laid aside, their place is supplied by enthusiastic devotions. The visits of the minister to the schools in his parish, will prevent these evils; if the teachers wish to appear orthodox, they must be really so. The examination of the children will develope the system of education, and any sinister practice will be discovered. Indeed the knowledge that the watch-

watchful pastor is in the habit of paying this attention to the instruction of the poor, will prevent the attempt. The expectation of a superintending eye is always advantageous.

Sunday schools are become so general, that there are, I believe, few parishes in the kingdom where they have not been established. Should however a parish fall to the lot of a young divine in which a Sunday-school has not been formed, I recommend him to use his utmost exertion to procure one. The advantages of the institution are great. Although the instruction to be gained there, will in few instances be sufficient for an intirely uneducated child, yet it will

will act as a stimulus in the daily school, to both teacher and scholar; the activity of the teacher, and the industry of the scholar, will be called forth, that the credit of the former may be supported, by the latter being in due time brought sufficiently forward, to take his place in the Sunday-school.

The children of the poor, especially in these days, are obliged to leave the daily school at an early age, to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows. The Sunday-school is then of material service; it not only affords a weekly exercise and instruction in reading, but it urges the child to endeavour to retain what he has learned, that his place and credit in the class may not

not be lost. The last benefit I shall mention, which the children of the poor derive from the Sunday-school, but by no means the least, is their being taken regularly and orderly to hear the service of the Church.

The superintendance of the Sunday-school, especially in villages, rests commonly on the parochial minister; a few hints therefore respecting its management, may be serviceable to a young man inexperienced in the business. The first step is to throw the scholars into classes, either two, or three, as his judgment, and the circumstances of the parish may point out. If he is placed in a widely extended village, two classes will,

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in my opinion, be sufficient; in a town, or compact village, a third class may be added for the younger children who cannot read. To the highest class, if the minister can raise a fund for the purpose, a Bible, a Prayer-book, and a religious tract, may be given; to the second class the Psalter, and to the third class a small cheap spelling-book.

When the funds will afford the books I have recommended to be given to the highest class, the advantages attending the Sunday-school extend beyond the scholar. The family are supplied with the Scriptures, and the prayers of the Church, as well as furnished with a reader; and the tract likewise

is not only an exercise in reading for the child, but it is a vehicle to convey instruction, in Christian doctrine and practice, to the parents. The psalter appears to be the most useful book for the junior class; the psalms and prayers are an exercise in reading, the collects may be made an exercise for the memory, and any part will afford an examination of the child in the progress he has made in spelling. A cheap spelling-book is sufficient for the third class. But I must repeat, that in general the advantage of the Sunday-school to this class is small. Till the child is of an age to read in the psalter, he is seldom able to attend the village Sunday-school with any regularity, which

which from most of the children is probably at a considerable distance; the instruction of an hour or two one day in the week, is not sufficient, as I have observed, to teach an intirely uneducated child to read, and the desire of getting into the Sunday-school, will animate exertion, as much as the desire of promotion from one class to another.

The last, but by no means the least important, branch of the private labour of the parish priest, is to keep up that intercourse with his parishioners, especially with those of the lower order, which will give him an insight into their manners and habits, and an influence

ence over their religious and moral conduct.

This can only be done by frequent and familiar visits; by entering into all their little cares and troubles, and, as far as he is able, relieving their distresses with his advice and assistance. By this constant communication, the minister will become acquainted with the different characters of his people, and be able to distinguish by his favour the deserving from the profligate and worthless. By his kind attention and good offices to the virtuous and orderly, they will be accustomed to fly to him in all their wants and perplexities,—to lean upon him whenever they require

quire support;—they will feel that on him is their chief dependence;—they will be aware that any indiscretion will not long be concealed from the ear of their watchful pastor, and the dread of losing the esteem and countenance of their best friend on earth, will be a powerful restraint upon any vicious inclination.

The intercourse between the minister and the higher ranks in his parish will not be so frequent, nor will he have that *apparent* influence over *them*, he has on the lower class. He will not be able to visit, or to discourse with them in the familiar manner he does with the cottager; nor will they feel the continual want of his advice

and assistance, which is so necessary to the poor and ignorant. But still there may be that interchange of civility and good offices, and that readiness, on his part, to afford assistance whenever opportunities offer, which will operate powerfully, and beneficially, upon *this* description of his parishioners. The love they will bear to the man, and the respect they will feel for the minister, always on the watch for the temporal and spiritual welfare of his whole flock, will be no weak barrier against the temptation to evil. The apprehension of his disapprobation, to whose opinion and judgment they are accustomed to pay a deference, will give a check to the first motions of sin; and this

this train of thought will open the ear to the still small voice of that monitor, who is ever at hand to direct us in the right way.

In this manner will the friendly communication which may, and ought to, be kept up between the pastor and his flock, have the best effect upon the general conduct of his parish. There is, however, one particular, in which his frequent visits to those of the lower rank will prove of the most essential service. Little differences must arise between neighbours; we cannot expect the rude and ignorant to be exempt from them; for such, I fear, are to be found in more polished life. These heats and animosities, trifling perhaps

in their origin, from the constant attention of the minister will be known to him as soon as they occur; and will then be easily allayed: but if suffered to break out into flame, they will not so readily be extinguished; and nothing is more detrimental to the moral order of a parish, than want of harmony.

The parochial walks of the parish priest, have however a yet higher aim than the order and regularity of his people. The first and principal object of all his labour, public and private, will be religion; this he will lay as the foundation of virtue; on Christian doctrine, he will build Christian morals. And much religious instruction

tion may, indeed ought to be given in private; many doctrines and duties of the Gospel may be urged in this manner more effectually than from the pulpit. A word spoken in a favourable season, will oftentimes strike more forcibly, than the best and clearest chain of argument in a sermon. Conversation too affords opportunity of objection on the part of the instructed; and an excuse for a sin of commission, or of omission, weighty in the scale of self-judgment, may, when brought to a more even balance, be made appear light as air. And upon this familiar intercourse with our parishioners, it is, we must rest our chief hope of counteracting the

wiles of schism, and enthusiasm; it is by such a constant pastoral communication with our flocks, that we can be acquainted with their spiritual state, and prevent the weak and ignorant being drawn away from the Church, and all sober religion.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is an essential means of grace, an indispensable requisite in obtaining salvation; and yet is very frequently neglected. This duty therefore should be urged upon the flocks committed to our charge, in every way likely to prove effectual; and we shall often find, that after the solemn and impressive exhortation of the Church to partake in the Holy Com-

Communion, and various discourses from the pulpit, explaining the nature, and enforcing the necessity of complying with this injunction of our Saviour, have failed, we shall often find, that a short conversation upon the subject in private will succeed: it will dispel a doubt—or calm a fear—or answer an excuse—or awaken a negligent Christian to a proper sense of his situation; and we shall have the satisfaction of seeing the former absenter from, become a constant attendant at, the Lord's Table.

In like manner the duty of private prayer may be more powerfully urged in a domestic visit, than in a sermon. We may press the

propriety, the comfort, the necessity, of applying to God in all our individual wants and distresses, and returning him thanks for the many particular mercies and blessings we receive, more effectually in a friendly conversation, than in a set didactic discourse. There are likewise offences against the laws of God, for the correction of which, we must rest principally on our private exhortations. Upon that too common crime, the want of chastity, we can touch but lightly in public; in private we may be more explicit in advice or reproof, and the application may be direct and personal. Indeed, religious and moral duties can, in some instances, be enforced in no other

other manner. The man who never enters the doors of a Church, cannot profit by our public instruction; and in all cases, religious exhortation will prove most beneficial, when we can bring the matter home to the individual, and say "thou art the man." The heart may be steeled by self-love, and self deception, against the arrow shot from the pulpit. In the general picture of vice thus held up to view, mankind are ready to perceive a resemblance to their neighbours, but seldom discover a likeness to themselves. And not only will the minister, in these friendly communications, have the advantage of the ear of his parishioners, and of making his

instruction personal, but the attention itself will very much awaken in his flock a sense of religion. The care bestowed upon their spiritual welfare will declare, in a manner all can comprehend, that the concerns of the next world are of the greatest moment; and the very urging upon them anxiously, and continually, the performing particular duties, will impress on their minds that these duties are of the highest importance.

Another branch of the pastoral office there is, which can only be performed by parochial visits; and that is, to gain an insight into the state of education among the lower class, and to learn whether those who

who are able to read possess the Scriptures, and the Liturgy of our Church. It is much to be wished, that in each family there should be a Bible, and a Prayer-book; and one capable of reading them. Where this is not the case, the minister ought to use every exertion in his power, to supply the deficiency in learning or books: and in few parishes, I believe, charity and opulence are at so low an ebb, as not to afford the assistance required, if the clergyman is active in calling them forth.

The possession of the Scriptures by the lower orders, and the ability to read them, are objects very desirable to be attained; for although the Bible is not sufficient

for religious instruction, without the aid of that ministry appointed by our Lord, to "teach all nations:" yet the reading and study of the sacred volume is greatly conducive to the knowledge and practice of Christianity. PRAYER and the Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER are likewise so necessary to the Christian life, that with the ability to READ, and the possession of the HOLY SCRIPTURES, they form the four cardinal objects of pastoral care.

Whenever, therefore, the parish is not too populous to admit of that familiar visitation I have recommended; or so small that there is no occasion for a memento, I advise the parochial minister, to furnish himself,

himself with a list of the families in the parish, with marks denoting the state of each in the particulars above-mentioned. By casting his eye over this register, previous to a village walk, he will perceive where his presence is most required, and what turn of conversation he is to seek, in his different visits.

If no better plan occurs to his mind, let him take the following; I have known it to be adopted, and to prove useful.

Column 1	2	3	4	5
	R	B	P	S
A. B.	+	+	—	—
C. D.	+	—	+	+
E. F.	+	=		—

The

The first column contains the name of the family.—The second, the ability or disability to read.—The third, the possession, or capability of purchasing, or want of a Bible, and a Prayer-book.—The fourth, the use or neglect of private prayer.—The fifth, the attendance, or non-attendance, at the Lord's Table. The marks, denoting the state of the family in these particulars, it will be perceived, are the algebraical characters of plus, minus, and equality; which in the above specimen are thus used.

A. B. $\frac{R}{+}$. There is at least one in the family who can read. $\frac{B}{+}$ They possess a Bible, and a Prayer book.

book. $\frac{P}{-}$ Private prayer is neglected. $\frac{S}{-}$ They are never seen at the Lord's Table.

C. D. $\frac{R}{+}$ This family can read. $\frac{B}{-}$ They have not a Bible. $\frac{P}{+}$ They are in the habit of private prayer. $\frac{S}{+}$ They attend the Sacrament.

E. F. $\frac{R}{+}$ This family can read. $\frac{B}{=}$ They are in a situation to furnish themselves with books. $\frac{P}{-}$ The use of private prayer is not ascertained. $\frac{S}{-}$ Not one of the family attends the Communion.

These, or any like short memoranda,

randa, easily noted down, will much assist the watchful shepherd, in the care and superintendance of his flock. He will have under his eye, the wants of the different branches of his spiritual family; and he will at a glance perceive where education, where books, where advice, or reproof, is required; and he will thus be enabled to apply the talents intrusted to him to the best advantage.

Nothing conduces so much to the order of our temporal affairs, as keeping accurate accounts. Just so is it in spiritual concerns. When we often take a view of what we owe to our flock; when such and such debts of duty appear upon the parochial account book, we shall

shall find ways and means to discharge them as they become due. But if through inattention or negligence, we suffer them to accumulate, they may increase beyond the power of payment; and when we are called upon to give in the account of our stewardships, we may find ourselves in that state of insolvency, from which mercy itself cannot relieve us.

The professed Christians in this kingdom, appear to be more split and divided in the present day, than they ever were before; and proselytism rages in no common degree. The utmost vigilance of the pastor is therefore required, to preserve his flock from schism; and no preservative is so likely to prove effica-

efficacious, as frequent parochial visits. By this familiar intercourse, not only the minister gains an insight into the spiritual state of his people, and is thereby enabled to give an early check to any wrong propensities, but the sheep know the shepherd; they are convinced of his being able, and willing, to lead them in the right way; they are acquainted with his voice, and they follow him. Where this attention is not paid, where the flock is left greatly to itself, no wonder if they go astray, and the wolf catcheth them.

In these days then, when wolves of the wildest description are constantly prowling about, seeking whom they may devour, let me advise

vise my brethren to be always upon the alert; to be ever walking round and round the fold. Their appearance alone will contribute greatly to safety. When the watchman is seen at his post, the robber is generally deterred from his purpose. Where the minister is known to be in the habit of this intercourse with his parishioners, there the itinerant preacher, and the hawker of enthusiastic and schismatic tracts, are not inclined to pay very frequent visits; they look for a more favourable soil, whereon to sow the seed of their wild doctrines; some uncultivated spot, where the noxious plants are in no danger of being rooted out; but will be allowed to grow, and

expand,

expand, till their eradication is become difficult.

I would not however have the young pastor imagine, that his presence alone will be sufficient to guard the flock; he will find various arts used to seduce them, *which* † it will require his utmost watchfulness to counteract; nor must he be discouraged, if after all his care and attention, some are drawn away from the Church; for mistaken zeal is arrived at that height, it seems impossible, in every instance, to stem the torrent. The dispersion of tracts, inculcating the tenets of Calvin—sensible illumination—the necessity of sudden conversion—the universal negligence of the clergy—and the insufficiency

† not in Italics

sufficiency of the Church to salvation, is a principal engine employed. These tracts are sold by hawkers at a cheap rate, or given by some person in the neighbourhood in a higher rank, with profession of peculiar anxiety for the welfare of the soul, or thrown from the window of a carriage to the lower orders. The only way to counteract this movement of heaven and earth to make one proselyte, is to meet the disease in time; to be always at hand to discover the earliest taint, and prepared to apply a remedy.

The minister, in his cottage visits, if he looks to the shelf, will sometimes perceive, peeping out between the Bible and Prayer-

book,

book, one of these little tracts; he will upon inspection find it perhaps to contain no inconsiderable portion of sound doctrine, and much practical Christianity, worked up in a plain and familiar style, well adapted to the lower class. In certain parts however, the cloven foot will appear. The reader will be directed to consult his *feelings*, whether the *new birth* has taken place; Or a story will be told how long a sinner, groaning under the weight of his transgressions, attended his *parish Church* without any *good effect*; but accidentally putting his head into a *conventicle*, the discourse of the preacher went home to his heart, and after a few strug-

gles,

gles, he was *assured* of salvation. Or a dialogue will be introduced; in which the parish priest is represented as a mixture of ignorance, indolence, and worldly mindedness, and the sectarian teacher as a pattern of good sense, piety, and disinterestedness.

For these insidious publications, let the eye of the pastor be always on the watch. Wherever he discovers, let him take them down, and comment upon the unscriptural doctrines, and the insinuating method of working up the poison, with so much pure Christianity. Let him point out the danger of the doctrines, and the falsity of the accusations. This my brethren will find no easy or pleasant task; they

they will sometimes find it difficult, to make the objectionable parts sufficiently comprehended, to counteract them; and yet these incomprehended parts, however parodoxical it may sound, will be capable of doing mischief; for the poison is mixed up with so much wholesome religious nourishment, and in so palatable a manner to the piously inclined, but ignorant Christian, that before he understands the tenets of the enthusiast, he forms a partiality for the sect; and is imperceptibly led on to believe their wild doctrines, and attach himself to their society. And the egotism required to answer the accusations brought against the clergy, is very unplea-

sant to an ingenuous mind. But the arrogance of the enthusiast, who scruples not to boast of every human excellence and virtue, as well as of immediate divine communication, calls upon us to put some constraint upon ourselves, and to meet their charges with boldness, as well as firmness. Let the Christian minister shew the erroneousness of the doctrines, from Scripture, and meet the charge of negligence with the practice, as well as the profession, of zeal and activity.

When a philosopher of old was informed, that certain persons calumniated him, he made this reply, " I will live in such a manner, that no one shall believe

 them."

them." Let us be ever at our posts, and attentive to the spiritual concerns of those committed to our care, and then no one will believe, what the enemies of the Church may say, respecting the negligence of the clergy.

But whatever may be the attention and care of the pastor, few instances, I fear, occur, where the flock has been preserved intire; there will be found in most parishes some wanderers from the fold, who have attached themselves to sectarian teachers. The parochial minister must therefore consider, what is to be his conduct towards *them*. His duty certainly is to watch for, and take advantage of, every opportunity to shew the

the light of truth to those who are in error, to fetch home, if possible, a wandering sheep. The hope however of reclaiming an enthusiast, I am afraid is small. To the man who applies to his feelings for a knowledge of his spiritual state, who believes that an immediate divine impulse imparts to him the rule of his faith, and practice, all argument drawn from reason and Scripture is thrown away; under these impressions, the exercise of reason must be considered impiety, and Scripture is superseded. To those therefore who have forsaken the Church, who enter its doors, only when the service does not interfere with a regular attendance at the conventicle, the constant at-

tention of the parochial minister will be useless, whilst to the rest of the parish it will be detrimental.

Most of the lower class of village sectarians (who are generally methodists) would, I believe, gladly keep up a communication with their parish priest; they would be pleased with his pastoral calls, and with his prayers in sickness. But can we, circumstanced as they are, usefully to themselves, can we conscientiously on our own parts, can we safely to others, thus attend them? Our *prayers* may be grateful to a sick person of this description, but a deaf ear will be turned to our *doctrinal instruction*; the religious opinions and tincture will be taken from the schismatic teacher.

If

If we attend with him, our's will be the subordinate department. We can in such a case be of no material service, and if we believe an *apostolic priesthood* to be an essential part of the *Church* of Christ, by joining the unordained preacher in taking care of the soul of a parishioner, by thus placing him upon an equality with the regular pastor, we disguise our real sentiments, we virtually declare schism to be no sin, and we lead the rest of our flock into error.

The parish priest will behave with civility to those who have forsaken him; he will, if occasion calls for it, assist them in their temporal affairs; but in spiritual matters, he must consider them as not

within his fold. When desired to perform the offices of the Church, he will feel that his duty forbids him to refuse; and he will readily seize this, and every other opportunity, of throwing in a word of advice; but he should, I think, forbear the *unsolicited* attendance at the sick bed, and the familiar parochial visit.

This appears to me the best, the only line of conduct we can pursue with those, who by the artful insinuation of others, or through their own pride, and itching ears, have been enticed from the Church. The kindness due from us to them as fellow-travellers on the road of life, ought not to be withheld; and yet I have known the common civilities

vilities of a clergyman to a schismatic parishioner, mentioned by the latter, as a proof that the former did not disapprove of his religious conduct; and urged as an argument to induce another of his parishioners to attend the conventicle. Such attacks, however, we must meet with other weapons, than incivility and unkindness; this ungoverned spirit of proselytism will give us uneasiness, and excite our pity, but let it not raise our anger. Christian charity should guide all our actions; especially ought it to be our rule in spiritual concerns. But at the same time we must be careful, not to give our sanction to that mistaken, yet too fashionable liberality, of considering, or speak-

ing of, every one who names the name of Christ, as within the pale of his Church. Whenever occasion requires, let us openly and boldly declare we consider, and are by Scripture borne out in the consideration, that our Blessed Lord founded his Church on the Apostles; and that through the *Apostolic ministry* he will continue it to the end of the world. That those, who joining themselves to *schismatic societies forsake* the *Apostolic ministry, forsake* the *Church;* —they withdraw themselves from the care of the parochial priest;— they are virtually absent from his flock;—that although they are still included amongst the number of those who have been *authoritatively*

tively committed to our care, and of whom therefore we must give account at the awful day of judgment, yet our souls will have been delivered with respect to them—we would have "watched for their souls," but they would not "submit" themselves to "our spiritual rule;"—that they have transferred the responsibility from us, and upon themselves will fall the effect of whatever spiritual sins, and errors, they have committed;—and that we cannot but dread they will be called upon, to answer before the tribunal of their Redeemer, for having *divided* and *distracted* His CHURCH which it was His positive *command*, and most earnest *prayer*, should be ONE UNITED BODY.

CONCLUSION.

THE plan I proposed when I began this little tract is now completed. I have thrown together a few hints upon the different functions of the parochial clergy.

It was far from my intention to enter into controversial points, respecting the origin and appointment of the Christian ministry, or to raise opportunities of discussing disputed doctrines. My sole object was to collect into a small manual,

manual, for the use of the younger clergy of the Church of England, some practical observations upon the duties of a parish priest, which the reading and experience of many years, passed in that situation, had suggested to a mind, deeply impressed with the importance of the ministerial office.

Upon a review of what I have written, I entertain a hope that I have not deviated from the plan laid down. The reader will be at no loss to discover my sentiments upon the constitution of the Christian Church, and he will perceive I have not forborn to intimate my opinion upon several points of doctrine, on which the ministers

and members of the Church are not perfectly agreed. But I have touched upon these matters, I trust, in so uncontroversial, and so unoffending a manner, that none of my brethren, between whom and myself there may be some shades of difference, will on that account be prevented profiting from the hints I have given them, relating to the practical part of their pastoral duties.

Respecting the execution of the plan, I am aware if the book is read, there must be various opinions. Some readers may think I have laid burdens upon the clergy, too heavy for them to bear: others will say I have placed the standard

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of pastoral duty too low: observations will likewise be made on the style and language of the work.

I do not mean to hold at arm's length the literary critic,—or to despise the opinions of any of my brethren who may not agree with me.

Whenever a writer sends his labours into the world, the public has a right to expect, that no reasonable exertion on his part shall be wanting, to render the composition fit for its inspection; no excuse can be admitted for errors, which a little time and attention would have prevented. From the nature of the work, the reader will not in my book seek for any thing but information. The attention therefore

therefore I have paid to the style and language, has been to give my opinions and advice in the plainest manner, and in the fewest words Nothing very uncouth, I trust, will be found in the style; and whilst the sheets were going through the press, I have endeavoured to take out any spots and blemishes which might offend the correct eye of the literary critic.

To my brethren who may think I have not laid my rule on the exact line of pastoral duty, some considering I have deviated on one side, and some on the other side of the narrow track, to such I deem it incumbent upon me to say a few words before I conclude.

To those who consider I have given

given too much latitude to the Christian minister in his intercourse with the world, I beg to repeat, that the human mind will not sustain continued exertion; some relaxation from official labour is requisite, and this may and should be sought in society. To those who would deprive the clergy of all intercourse with the world, I beg to observe, that Christianity is by no means morose and ascetic, that the Gospel considers man as a social being, not abstracted and solitary; that it teaches us to *use* the *world* and not to *abuse* it; to resist and overcome temptation, not to fly from the trials with which the Almighty sees fit to prove us in this life, to prepare

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us for the life to come. Social pleasures therefore, innocent and professional, such intermixture with the laity, I mean, as will not interfere with professional duties, nor degrade the clerical character, and these alone have I recommended or allowed to the clergy, such I repeat are, in my opinion, both lawful and expedient.

Others there may be of my brethren, especially of those for whose use these hints are chiefly intended—the younger clergy—who will think I have infringed upon their Christian liberty, imposing duties which the Church does not require from her ministers, and thus depriving them of pleasures, which in the world are deemed allowable.

lowable. The objections I apprehend will not be so much against the public, as against the private exertions I deem requisite from the parish priest. Many will admit the truth of my observations upon the performance of the public services of the Church, that the greatest care should be taken to read the Liturgy and offices with propriety, and that the doctrines and duties of Christianity should be enforced from the pulpit with the greatest earnestness; but in requiring that constant parochial attendance, upon which I lay so much stress, I shall, I fear, by numbers of my brethren be thought fancifully to have stretched beyond all ecclesiastical rule, and filled up that time with

others of their great account, should ever bear in recollection, that we shall one day stand before a tribunal, where the strictest merely formal compliance with canons and constitutions, will avail no more, than did in old time the pharisaical tithing of anise and cummin; there are more important, though unprescribed duties, which must turn the balance that will weigh the Christian priest; notleaving the other undone, these ought to be, and must be done, if we hope for a favourable sentence at the last day. We must give our time, we must give our minds, to the sacred duties we have undertaken. We have dedicated ourselves to the service

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of the Church, and surely we who have engaged in this spiritual profession, are not called upon for less exertion than are those, who have entered into professions of a temporal nature. These however we shall often find wiser in their generation than ourselves, and they may afford us a useful example.

When the fleeting and perishable possessions of this world shew symptoms of taking wing, when fame and fortune are in danger, and legal aid is called in, how active is the lawyer; how alive to the interest of his client; his whole mind is engaged to counteract the open attacks, or the insidious arts of the opponent, that he may do his

spiritual guide, and medical adviser are summoned in their respective departments to the bed of sickness, let the conduct of the physician be an example to the parochial minister. The whole mind of him who is to take care of the body, is called forth to save and heal the perishable substance; he is ever at the service of those who require his assistance; no unprofessional business draws him aside, no pleasures intice him from his professional duties; he chearfully allows the hours of his refreshment and rest to be broken in upon; the almost hopeless case does not slacken his exertion, nor does the danger of contagion affright him from the infectious chamber.

chamber. A less degree of attention surely ought not to be paid to the soul, than is paid to the body; nor is the spiritual less subject to disease than the corporeal frame of man; it is frequently, to speak in the figurative language of Scripture, full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; and requires the aid of the spiritual physician. The health of the soul, like that of the body, is likewise often undermined before the patient is aware; the contagion of bad example, or the propensities of human nature, frequently make inroads upon the unguarded heart before they are observed; and the cure becomes difficult and doubtful. In these cases let us who have the charge

of the immortal spirit, look to him who has the care of that part, which must one day return to the dust as it was; and let us be equally active and assiduous in our attendance. Let us probe the wounds of our patient to the bottom, let us find out the sins which easily beset him, awaken him to a sense of his danger, and the certain restoration to ease and health if he follows our prescription. And here we have the advantage over the attendant upon the body; we can give that assurance of health, if our regimen is pursued, which he cannot. Let the head be ever so sick, and the heart ever so faint, if the wretched sufferer will follow our directions, if he will repent

pent and forsake his sins, and turn to God in sincerity and truth, impowered by Him who cannot deceive, we may promise that his spiritual wounds shall be healed; and he shall find rest to his soul.

Intrusted as we are with the eternal interests of our brethren, let us not be, in zeal and industry, behind those who undertake the care of their temporal concerns. Not only the *time* of the physician and the lawyer is *employed*, but their *thoughts* are *engaged* in their profession; and unless the Christian minister in like manner fixes his *mind* upon the high and important office he has taken upon him, he cannot properly perform its duties. If his heart is given up

to the world, if temporal concerns, of any description, *chiefly* occupy his thoughts, and his clerical labours become mere bodily service, although the common demand of official duty may be discharged; and even an increased attention occasionally paid, yet there will be a failure in those things, which distinguish the "true shepherd" from the "hireling." When the thoughts are occupied by worldly, instead of professional pursuits, the main spring to every thing that is useful and praiseworthy in the clerical character is wanting. If the parish priest would obey the command of his blessed Master, given to him in the form of a request to St. Peter,

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"to feed His sheep," his heart must be in his parish; that must not only be the sphere of his exertions, but the chief source of his pleasure and his pain. He must enter with zeal into every thing that concerns his flock; he will, it is true, in such case, feel with keenness professional disappointment, but he will experience professional comfort, far beyond any other satisfaction this world can afford.

Ever then, my young reader, bear in recollection, that if you would meet your Lord with joy and not with sorrow, when the dread summons arrives to give an account of your stewardship, you must devote yourself to your profession. If you would do the work

of an Evangelist, you must *wean* your *mind* from the world; I say not, *withdraw yourself*. I must once again repeat, in the world you have duties to perform, in the world you may seek relaxation from labour; but *professional employment* must *occupy* the *thoughts*, and fill up the *hours* of *business*; neither worldly interest, nor pleasure, nor too great an attachment to unprofessional studies, must be allowed to engross the mind in such a manner, that pastoral duty becomes nearly confined to forms and ceremonies.

Consider, let me intreat you, the importance of the office you have undertaken, and the solemn engagements into which you have entered;

entered. Your office is that of a minister, a servant of Christ, set to watch for the salvation of souls; an ambassador, sent by your Divine Master, to urge, in his stead, the cause of God and Religion against Sin and Satan; and before the *holy altar* you have devoted yourself to the discharge of this momentous trust. Reflect daily upon the earnest exhortation you *there* received, the awful warning *then* given to you, and the solemn *promises* you *made* in the *presence* of God. And that you may never forget them, let me recommend to you the advice of Archbishop Hort, "to read over the offices of Ordination, once at least in every year." There can be no better memo-

memorandum of the ministerial engagements, than the interrogatories in these sacred rites; and no words can, I think, more strongly impress upon the mind, the weight and importance of the priestly office, than those contained in the admonition of the Bishop, to a candidate for the priesthood.

If these fail to awaken you to a just sense of the awful responsibility of the situation in which you stand; no language I can use will prove effectual. I shall conclude therefore, in the words of the reverend father in God who sent you forth to preach the Gospel, with "exhorting you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance, into how

how high a dignity, and how weighty an office and charge you are called: that is to say, to be a messenger, and watchman, and steward of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children which are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever."

Have always therefore printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which he bought with his death, and for whom he shed his blood. The Church and congregation whom you must serve, is

his

his spouse, and his body. And if it shall happen the same Church, or any member thereof, do take any hurt or hindrance, by reason of your negligence, you know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue. Wherefore consider with yourself the end of the ministry toward the children of God; toward the spouse and body of Christ, and see that you never cease your labour, your care, and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfect-

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ness of age in Christ, that there be no place left either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life."

FINIS.

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